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The Saturday Review of Literature

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"WILL WE HAVE INFLATION?"
By Harry Scherman
Reviewed by Richard T. Ely

"THEN SHALL THE DUST RETURN"
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"LOUISIANA HAYRIDE"
By Harnett T. Kane
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"HISTORY AS THE STORY OF LIBERTY"
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CLIFFORD DOWDEY "should become one of the real figures of his time." *(See page 5)*

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Biggest Literary Show in America

DEOCH FULTON

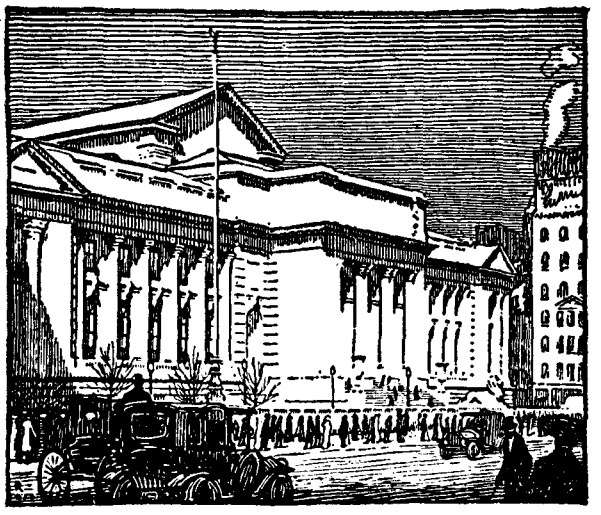
RECENTLY, an angry man pounded the counter of the Information Desk at The New York Public Library. He couldn't, he said, find anywhere in the catalogue "the greatest poem in the English language." What kind of a library was it that had no copy of "The Orange Boat?"

No, he didn't know the author, but it was an old poem. The Desk tried its anthologies. No luck.

Ridiculous, the man said. It was a long poem—lot of verses.

"That's it—verses. 'A book of verses under a tree or something.'"

He got the Rubaiyat.



—From an old line drawing.

By mail, telephone, and personal inquiry about three thousand questions a day come to the Information Desk. Dates, names, places; quotations and translations; how to use the Library; where to find singing mice; many routine, some memorable questions. To each, large or small, the Library tries to give satisfactory answer.

An ex-farmer wanted to find a former partner in a venture in Arkansas, to clear up a real estate tangle. His last word had been from Duluth, an indefinite rumor that his friend had gone into government service. No, he thought, it wouldn't be a desk job, might be the army or navy.

A quick search by the librarian through the registers. No to the army, no to the navy. "You're right, though. Here he is, sergeant of marines stationed at Hawaii."

An author working on a new book wanted to know, so that his research might be accurate, or, if the facts were not known, unassailable, what Columbus had for breakfast on the first day of his first voyage of discovery. The Library couldn't help him; Columbus failed to mention it.

But answering questions is only a part, though an important part of the job of one of the world's largest libraries. Its biggest job, of course, is handling the reading and research needs of more than 10,000 every day. Last year alone, more than 40,000,000 people were counted by tabulators.

What are they looking for, these people who come from New York, from every state in the Union, from overseas? They are sightseers, including the hundreds of thousands who visit the exhibitions; a few who want only to get out of the rain or cold; but most of all they come because they know that they can find the record of human affairs since the invention of writing—the best guesses at an infinite past and an indefinite future.

Primarily the Library is a workroom, used chiefly by professionals more apt to taste and swallow than to chew and digest. As a fact finding factory it meets smoothly and efficiently an enormous and highly articulate demand, but it also serves the ends of scholarship and the needs of thousands of men and women, neither research workers nor scholars, who turn to the Library as the only source of which they know for answers to their personal problems.

One night, when the rush had quieted down, the librarian at the Information Desk was busy answering the day's letters. He didn't look beyond the call slip when someone put it before him and said:

"They say this book is restricted and I can't get it without an O.K."

The volume asked for was a medical work on pre-natal care.

"Why do you want it?"

"Why would any woman want it?"

The librarian came to with a start. Abashed at his own inobservance, he gave her the book.

Problems may be as individual as that, or they may involve expert examination of hundreds of volumes of foreign patents. This widely varied use is at the root of all the Library's book selection, cataloguing, and administration, as it seeks to provide for present needs and to anticipate the wants of readers in 2041. It has not funds to buy all it should, but it buys without prejudice, in the expectation that today's quarrel will be tomorrow's history.

No one man has read all the books in the Library. To do it he would have to know more than 3,000 languages and dialects and be able to read 100 pages an hour, 10 hours a day for about 2,840 years. But the more than 2,000,000 registered readers who use the Library annually consult about 4,350,000 volumes, a million and a quarter more than the total book stock.

IN its several fields the Library's collections are so complete that the public comes expecting, as a matter of course, to find every book. If they were less complete they might be more impressive. A thousand, five thousand periodicals would seem like quite a lot, but how about 36,000, the number currently received? And they form only a small part of the whole periodical collection. Including magazines, serial documents, society publications, etc., it goes back to the beginning of periodical printing and, by way of government and academic reports, dime novels, literary and historical magazines, and illustrated weeklies comes to its current acquisitions. The Library has more than half of the titles in the "Union List of Serials."

About half of the income from the Library's general book fund goes for

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periodicals, but periodicals are only one of many classes strong in material for research.

The Central Building of the Library, at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, was designed by Carrère and Hastings and occupies the site of the old Croton reservoir, land made famous by Washington in the retreat from New York. It was under construction for thirteen years, cost the city $9,000,000, and was opened to the public on May 23, 1911.

The plan of the building follows in general a sketch made by Dr. John Shaw Billings, the first Director, and in addition to the reading rooms includes administration offices, work rooms, and book stacks with sixty-seven miles of shelf. Special reading rooms for music, maps, art, prints, rare books, and the Berg and Spencer collections are on the third floor; economics, Jewish, Slavonic, and Oriental collections are on the second; science and technology and current periodicals are on the first. On the ground floor, entered from Forty-second Street, are the newspaper room, now closed, the Central Circulation Branch, and Central Children's Room maintained by the Reference Department, and the circulating picture collection. On the first and third floors are rooms for special exhibitions and there are permanent exhibitions of books and prints on all three.

The Main Reading Room on the third floor is one of the largest in the world. It has a quarter acre of floor space and seats for nearly 800 readers. The floor of this room is supported by the main book stacks, the only structural steel in the building. The rest is solid masonry, a comfort in days when the hum of a motor is ominous.

A printing plant with five linotype machines and a battery of presses, a large bindery, and the photostat work room are on the ground floor. In the basement and sub-basement are the light, heat, and power plant and carpenter, paint, and metal working shops.

In its present form, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, is a comparatively new institution. Incorporated in 1895, it was a consolidation of the Astor Library (1848), the Lenox Library (1870) and the Tilden Trust (1887), which united to form what is now the Reference Department. To it was added, at the City's request, the administrative supervision of the several free circulating libraries in the boroughs of The Bronx, Manhattan, and Richmond. The oldest of these, the Harlem Library, was founded in 1825. The Free Circulating, St. Agnes, Washington Heights, Aguilar, Tottenville, University Settlement, Webster, and Cathedral libraries were joined to the system at various dates from 1900 to 1904. The Reference Department was established and is still maintained by private endowment.

The City provides the building and allows some $60,000 a year for its upkeep. The Library corporation spends about $1,500,000 annually for books, salaries, and operating expenses.

Sixty-one branch and sub-branch libraries, thirty-eight of the branches in Carnegie buildings, and more than two hundred minor stations in fire houses, hospitals, jails, police stations, schools, and the street corners where the book wagons stop in The Bronx and Staten Island are supported by the City at an annual cost of about $1,600,000 of which only $150,000 is appropriated for books. This is the Circulation Department. It lends about 12,000,000 books a year for home reading.

The branches do more than lend books. They are community centers where book, stamp, garden, and other clubs meet. Many of them have auditoriums with small but well equipped stages for plays, concerts, lectures, forums.

New York's great foreign population creates special problems and special circulation collections have been built to meet them. The Webster Branch in the Yorkville district has one of the largest collections of Czech books outside of Prague. Of the 1,400,000 books in the Circulation Department 138,000 are in foreign languages.

Except for the special collections and the scale of operation demanded by New York, the Circulation branches function like those in any large city. They are accepted as a matter of course, seldom praised, often blamed when, because the city fails to supply enough money, the libraries are short of books and staff. Just often enough to keep discouragement at bay come letters telling of jobs won, examinations passed, educations furthered, through library books.

The Department's work begins with children, with stories told in the branches, in the parks, on the air; it continues through school, business, or professional life, and old age. Its books in braille or recordings go to the blind. It is as much a part of the city's life as air and sunshine, and given little more heed, but it lacks the books and buildings to do a proper job.

THE Reference Department has a great many of the books its readers need, but by no means all. There are nearly 3,000,000 volumes and pamphlets but unlike the Circulation branches which have many copies of

(*Continued on page* 16)

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The Rise of Kirby Harron

SING FOR A PENNY. By Clifford Dowdey. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. An Atlantic Monthly Press Publication. 1941. 366 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

IN this story of the rise of Kirby Harron, Mr. Dowdey deals with a period of Southern history that has been, on the whole, neglected by most of our novelists. We have had plenty of novels about the Civil War and plenty of novels about Reconstruction. We have had share-croppers and plantation-owners and Colonel Carters of Cartersville. But the building of the industrial South in the eighties and nineties, particularly in its cities, has not attracted many pens. It did not happen without conflict—and that conflict is Mr. Dowdey's theme.

Kirby Harron was a city man, a poor relation and a child of his age. The Harrons had owned a debt-ridden but cheerful plantation in Henrico County, in the days before the War—but the War had settled all that—the War and the Bowers family, who had lost nothing but their field-hands and were so successful in Richmond that they could still stay on top. So Bonny Harron, who had ridden with Stuart and married Emily Bowers, found himself unsuccessfully trying to run a harness-shop in Richmond.

Kirby knew that the family was going down hill. And nobody—or so he thought—seemed to care about it but him. They were content with the street on the wrong side of town where "the old people dreamed of their lost life and the young people dreamed idly, drifting through the slow-flowing days." But Kirby wasn't content. You could get where the Bowers were, if you had the money—and he set himself out to get it. "Sing for a Penny" is the story of his failure and his success. He got the money and broke his business enemies. He won and lost Nancy Pendleton—and won her again, in the end. He drove and dragooned his own family, ruthlessly, toward a goal they did not desire. Some, like Willie Costello, dropped in the harness—others rebelled against him. But he made himself "the Boss-man"—he and the hard-bitten spirit of the times. "He had started out . . . trying to win security for his family and new wife by making good paper to sell at a reasonable price. He had become a corporation . . . and he had grown into what the newspapers called an 'empire' to save his corporation." The very end has a touch of the conventional business titan but throughout the book Mr. Dowdey is less concerned with caricaturing Kirby than with trying to show how he got that way.

He is excellent, too, in showing three levels of society—the Bowers, who kept a gracious tradition of living but had to descend to the marketplace to keep it up—the nouveau-riche Meades, descendants of old Wash Meade, the scalawag peddler, who built a mushroom empire on the bones of Reconstruction—and the Harrons and their kin. For relief, we have sturdy Grandma Harron who didn't think it quite decent to have a bathroom put in the house, and Uncle Gracchus, the ex-cavalryman, given to store-bought liquor and three-voiced soliloquies, who lived according to his lights and didn't hurt anybody and, in spite of being a trial to Kirby, had satisfactions that Kirby did not. But then Kirby Harron wouldn't have known what to do with a light heart.

A thesis book in some ways, "Sing for a Penny" suffers somewhat from its thesis as such books are bound to do. With the business side of the novel, Mr. Dowdey has taken enormous pains, and it is convincing. And his gift for the delineation of minor character grows. There is a brief sketch of a Confederate reunion toward the end of the book as honest as it is touching. What he lacks, as yet, is the power which even the most painstaking realism will not give—the power to go one step beyond. Once Kirby Harron's character is set, he becomes less a man than a symbol of forces. The forces are carefully checked and balanced—there is no cheating about that. And yet, neither Kirby Harron nor Nancy Pendleton has quite the easy vitality of some of the lesser figures, though great labor has gone to their making. They do not live beyond the book—and that is something which happens or does not. And, when it does happen, the novelist is lucky.

Nevertheless, it is more informative to call attention to Mr. Dowdey's virtues than to criticize his defects. It ought to be apparent by now that Mr. Dowdey is a novelist who keeps on growing. His three novels of Virginia have a fine sincerity of approach and a gift for freshness of material. Put together they already form a considerable achievement. Mr. Dowdey isn't flashy, and he is sometimes pedestrian. But his grip on his subject increases and his honesty is unflagging. He should become one of the real figures of his time.

The Delafield Approach

NO ONE NOW WILL KNOW. By E. M. Delafield. New York: Harper & Bros. 1941. 306 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

THE heart of this novel is in the English 1890s. As the title implies, the book is by way of being a mystery; why did Lucian Lemprière die in the south of France, hardly mentioned by his family; why did Fred Lemprière, his elder brother, retire to Barbados and rum; and whose child was Callie Lemprière, Fred's or Lucian's? Fred and Lucian were both passionately in love with Lucian's wife, Rosalie, and she was fatally obsessed with Fred. All this took place in Wales, where the Lemprières, a Barbados family, occupied their time in doing nothing whatever. But first we learn about Lucian's grandchildren in 1939; then about his daughter Callie's adventures in England in 1910-18; and so at last we come to Wales.

It is a long approach, and E. M. Delafield seems to be tying and untying a somewhat unnecessary number of knots. Indeed, one is inclined to ask oneself whether this is a plot or a rather untidy puzzle. Actually, it is a plot, and a good plot: for the passions of "No One Now Will Know," though fiery and destructive, are leisurely passions, the world it describes is a leisurely world, and a corresponding plot is in order.

Since it deals with the melodrama (which Miss Delafield curbs but does not attempt to conceal) of the loves of three charming but quite useless people, we need not bother ourselves with inquiries as to whether this is or isn't an important book. It isn't. But it is charmingly written, emotionally satisfying, its minor characters are skillfully drawn, and it allows us to escape into a vanished world which—since we are not asked either to admire or regret it—we can enjoy.

E. M. Delafield

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A Fuller Anthology

THE WRITINGS OF MARGARET FULLER. Selected and edited by Mason Wade. New York: The Viking Press. 1941. 608 *pp., with index.* $5.

Reviewed by TOWNSEND SCUDDER, III

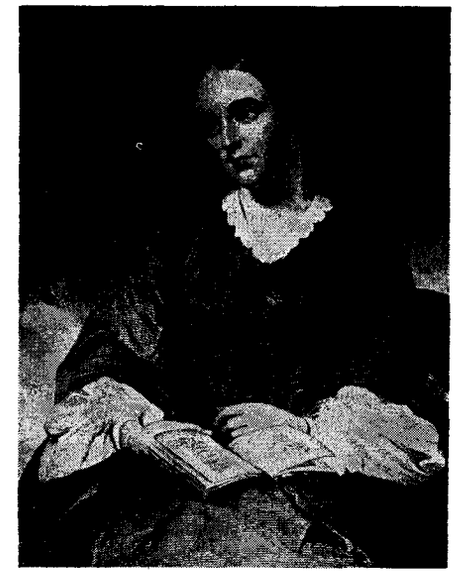
IT is clearly an act of justice to have Margaret Fuller at last come before the public as author and critic. Her colorful personality, her unusual and tragic career, were too much of a temptation for biographers, and they presented her as a personality rather than as a writer. Even Mr. Wade, editor of this excellent collection, is not entirely above reproach, for his recent life of Margaret Fuller, by its very title, "Whetstone of Genius," suggests that her interest and influence were largely personal. In this book, he has made amends. Here are her more important writings, to be read and judged on their own merits. Her widely scattered work, conveniently brought together, makes a volume well qualified to take its place in the library of every literate American who values the nation's intellectual heritage. Though by no means of equal literary merit, these "writings" deserve a place beside such compilations as H. S. Canby's one volume "Works of Thoreau," for like Thoreau, Margaret wrote with purpose, had ideas, and those ideas still speak today. At her worst, Margaret Fuller had an upholstered style. She could stuff pages with convoluted sentences. But when her first-rate mind is at its keenly analytical best, she forgets to be literary and writes with terse, vigorous directness.

Mr. Wade partitions this book into five compartments—divisions by and large chronological in arrangement. First comes Margaret's account of her Western trip, published in 1844 under the title, "Summer on the Lakes." Here Mr. Wade has done an excellent job of cutting. The fledgling author, unwilling to make sacrifices, crammed into her pages every experience of her journey, whether an actual adventure or merely an impression of some book she had just read. The non-essential shoots have now been pruned away and left the main trunk standing. As a result, Miss Fuller's narrative of travel, and her sage analyses of the problems and future of the West, emerge more clearly than when first published. The development of the West interested her, but so did the plight of the natives. While most observers were gloating over the expulsion of the Indians from lands they had regarded as their own, Miss Fuller saw the injustice of it.

The second section, "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," today will make slow reading for most persons. It suffers from the turgescence Miss Fuller is guilty of when most aware that she is engaged in writing. But as an important document in the cause of feminism it deserves the preservation it here receives.

The third section makes far better reading. In it Mr. Wade has concentrated those critical writings, done for the *Dial,* for Horace Greeley's *Tribune,* and for other papers, which establish Miss Fuller as one of America's few great literary critics. She was no emotional, subjective, impressionistic judge. She sought standards in criticism, and on these she based her own dissections.

The fifth section is given over to a selection of letters, the fourth to the record of Margaret's experiences in Italy during the troubled years 1847-50. She was not only an eyewitness of the heroic defense of Rome during Mazzini's short-lived Republic; she was a participant, serving as head of an overcrowded military hospital, where the blood and agony of the unjust siege were most apparent. Yet she was more even than this: she was a foreign correspondent getting her dispatches through to the *Tribune* in spite of every obstacle. There is a strangely modern ring to this last, most dramatic period of her life. In reading her account, now almost a hundred years old, one is inevitably reminded of some present-day newspaper men and women. She wished Americans to realize the struggle going on was their own struggle for liberty. "I earnestly hope," she wrote, "for some expression of sympathy from my country toward Italy. Take a good chance and do something; you have shown much good feeling toward the Old World in its physical difficulties—you ought to do still more in its spiritual endeavor. This cause is *ours* above all others; we ought to show that we feel it to be so."



Margaret Fuller

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

MORE FAMOUS WORDS OF FAMOUS PEOPLE

What famous characters from the pages of literature spake the words that are quoted below? Allowing 5 points for each one you can name, a score of 60 is par, 70 is good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 13.

1. "Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
2. "Since I left Plum Tree, down in Tennessee, this is the first time I've been warm."
3. "God's nightgown!"
4. "Please, sir, I want some more."
5. "Out, damned spot!"
6. "To be, or not to be: that is the question."
7. "I am a lone, lorn creetur, and everythink goes contrairy with me."
8. "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure."
9. "Boy, you'd better jump, 'cause there's two locomotives that's agoin' to bump!"
10. "Pigs is pigs!"
11. "God bless us every one!"
12. "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!"
13. "Open, sesame!"
14. "I 'spect I growed. Don't think nobody never made me."
15. "Cursed be my tribe if I forgive him!"
16. "An' the Gobble-uns'll git you ef you don't watch out."
17. "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"
18. "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink."
19. "Lord, what fools these mortals be!"
20. "The quality of mercy is not strained. It falleth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath."

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The Money-Go-Round

WILL WE HAVE INFLATION? By Harry Scherman. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1941. 171 *pp.* $1.

Reviewed by RICHARD T. ELY

THE operation of the word "inflation" against the human organism usually produces an uneasy feeling in the pit of the stomach. The word calls forth visions of tremendous volumes of paper money coming off the printing presses—money whose value drops and drops as more and more is printed. Of course inflation may occur in many less obvious ways, but the answers to the questions— "what is inflation?", "how and why does it happen?", "what to do about it?", have not often been given in language that the average man can understand. They are hidden in high sounding tones and in the "economic lingo" of official reports. Such a report was that made by the officials of the Federal Reserve System in which they recommended certain measures which they believed necessary to avert inflation. Mr. Scherman, in this little volume, has done an admirable job of translating the report into terms that almost anybody can understand, and in addition has given a clear picture of the factors involved in the danger of inflation. This sort of treatment will go far in transforming emotional states into constructive action which will contribute to the solution of the problem.

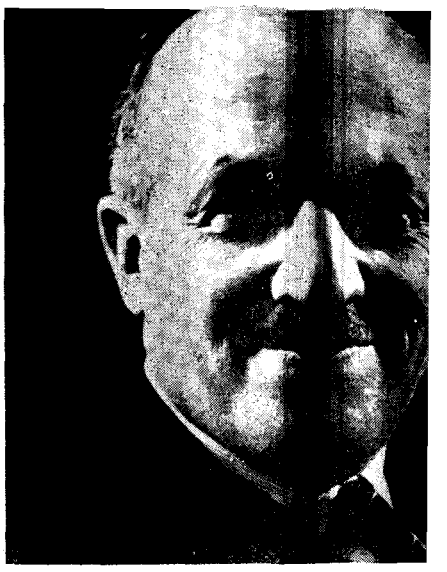
Mr. Scherman's answer to the question, "Will we have inflation?" is "No" —IF we are willing to pay the price necessary to avert it. One hears a great deal of vague and grandiose talk about sacrifice these days, but the suggestions we find here are not of that genre. There are some very specific things which the author says we can do. For instance, we should lend all we can to the federal government. He does not ask us to do this blindly, but explains exactly how this will help to keep our huge money supply from dangerously rising. Mr. Scherman asks us to insist on a measure to restore gold to circulation. His case for this recommendation is fully given in the article, "The Real Danger in Our Gold," which is reprinted in this volume, and which we reviewed here shortly after its initial appearance.

In order to avoid an inflationary price rise in the short run we are asked to exert pressure on our congressional representatives to enact into law the proposals made by the Federal Reserve officials. The kind of inflation which these proposals are directed at is the result of a redundancy of money, turned over faster and faster, against a supply of goods for consumers limited by war time necessities. This type of inflation is far less serious, and much easier to control than the sort which is the inevitable outcome of the collapse of a government's credit. This latter kind of inflation usually begins with government borrowing from banks—and the author points out that we are already $16,000,000,000 on the way. It is in connection with this danger that the crucial role of gold is discussed.

The reasoning behind each of the Federal Reserve proposals is carefully presented, but we cannot go into these in the brief space of this review. Let it suffice to say that in giving a lucid explanation of an important economic document, Mr. Scherman has also accomplished the difficult feat of making perfectly clear to the layman the meaning of such esoteric phrases as "wage lag", "sterilization of gold", "excess reserves", "bank credit currency", etc.

The recommendation in the matter of taxation and its relation to inflation is sound economic thinking combined with a high degree of courage. "We can insist upon, and every one of us can be ready to bear, greater and greater federal taxes. . . . There is no out for this, if we do not make up our minds as a really intelligent democracy to pay, to know we are paying and to be willing to suffer all the inconveniences of paying as we go along."

The two basic factors in the inflation problem are—one, the amount of money in the pockets of individuals and the rapidity with which that money changes hands; and two, the amount of purchasable goods and services available. As has been indicated above, Mr. Scherman has done a thorough job of discussing the first factor. However, in discussing the obverse side of the picture, which is just as important, he accepts too easily the frequently stated opinion that we are now approaching a condition of "full utilization of our economic capacity." This assumption accepts ninety to one hundred billion dollars (the estimated national income for the current year) as the highest figure which the national income can reach in the immediate future. We should consider the possibility of the national income reaching one hundred ten to one hundred twenty billion dollars, in which case we might be able to have both "guns and butter." Indeed, this thesis is held by two such divergent thinkers as the British economist, J. M. Keynes,



Harry Scherman

and the president of the Investment Bankers Association, Mr. E. F. Connely.

This is the very crux of the problem of inflation. The danger is not so much in the relative abundance of "free cash" in relation to the available amount of consumers goods, as in the *absolute* scarcity, the tapering off of the volume of those goods because of the inroads on our resources made by production for defense. In the last six years we have heard a great deal about the imminence of inflation, a danger inherent in the excess reserves of our banks. This danger, however, proved to be merely potential since it was overbalanced by other factors. Is it not possible that the new threat can be similarly sidetracked by an increase in consumers goods simultaneous with the defense effort?

The situation in the immediate future depends upon many unknowns, *viz.,* the degree of mechanization possible, the supply of labor, the amount of raw materials at our command, a variety of bottlenecks, and the extent of the defense program, which even now has not yet been determined These questions require a great deal of exploration and deserve the same sort of attention which Mr. Scherman has accorded the other side of the equation.

DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 372)
SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S

A. A. MILNE:
THE LOST GENERATION

. . . We . . . . . listen with tight-held breath,
Humbled to tears in wonder, strengthened to tears in pride,
As the youth which we dared to pity makes casual date with Death,
And, fired by a spirit we know not, goes off on its deathless ride.

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McKay . . .

THEY CAME TO A RIVER. By Allis McKay. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1941. 651 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

IN one sense the technique of the novel has lagged behind historic scholarship; for while most historians have long ago surrendered the hero and hero-worship approach to history, novelists still cling largely to that approach. Excepting such unanimist work as that of Romains in France and Dos Passos here, historical novels are almost certain to center upon a hero—a president, a pioneer, a king, a general, out of the pages of history. Miss Allis McKay's novel is a very welcome pointer in the other direction. "They Came to a River" holds that the history of the country, in particular, here, of the Columbia Valley in Washington, was molded by the nameless people who came to that virgin territory and staked their lives upon it. There are no great figures here, in our accepted sense, but instead an obscure group who borrow any greatness they may possess from their collective consciousness of ancestry and from the sprawling land in which they burrow.

They form, in fact, a collective hero, the valley people, and quite naturally Miss McKay has employed, modestly according to her limited needs, the episodic succession of scenes which Dos Passos worked out for his larger "U. S. A." Thus we follow the fortunes of a number of characters simultaneously, in a sequence of flashes and episodes. Now we are close to the life of Chris (for Christine) Hallowell, whose clear spirit and courageous heart are perhaps symbolic; she is the most articulate and most visionary of them. Now we are with the dogged Tom Velie who gives his heart to the soil, now with Ward Pearson, in his humble courtship of Kitty Abbott, now with the Walters brothers and their tangled, tragic fortunes. The spotlight finds each in turn, yet they are never alone. Their lives intermingle and blend, as their fortunes grow increasingly interdependent, and become at last one. They remain always the common people of America.

It is a very long book, naturally, and by its very nature neither dramatic nor glittering. It has other virtues to commend it: a quiet absorption in the common values of humanity; a loving telling of the thousand small heroisms that make a day; and throughout, a subdued, haunting stir of landscape, of the river itself.

Miss McKay has written, beautifully, a novel of real history.

Coffin . . .

THOMAS-THOMAS-ANCIL-THOMAS. By Robert Peter Tristram Coffin. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1941. 342 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

MR. COFFIN has made a pleasant compromise here between Alice Toklas and intelligibility. Thomas-Thomas-Ancil-Thomas is not, however, a purely objective derivative from purely subjective materials, he is a solid enough young boy whose chromosomes have retained more specific memories than most genetecists have discovered in the young of the species. Christopher Morley did a very similar and equally charming book some years ago, "Thunder on the Left."

Tom's hereditary memories are stirred up by slight sensory stimuli; the sun on his face, the glitter of a handful of beads, a sleigh track in the snow; the delicate trick which is extremely well realized is that when Thomas becomes an earlier Thomas or Ancil it is made evident that the earlier Thomas was also substantially the existing Thomas.

The impressions, of course, are those of Robert Peter Tristram Coffin, and very well worth reading as lyric prose, even if the narrative shifts do occasionally have about the same effect as a mild overdose of *cannabis indica*. There are a dozen stories, of course, and no one of them much more important than any of the others; the whole is in effect a song in praise of the immortality of the chromosome.

Mr. Coffin has many beautiful passages and some amusing ones. Most readers will smile at the indignation of the Colonial boy who is indignant over the fact that since his trousers had been cut down from his soldier father's, the spanks were administered to trousers that had been reviewed by General Washington.

Allis McKay

Waters . . .

PEOPLE OF THE VALLEY. By Frank Waters. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1941. 309 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES W. FERGUSON

IT is too bad that this book isn't better. This is not said flippantly, for the theme of it is such that the book deserves to be great. A story of epic proportions, character at once strangely real and yet symbolic, action enough to hold interest as it moves toward culmination, and a setting in which the inexplicable seems somehow appropriate—these elements you will find in "The People of the Valley." Moreover, the book bears the stamp of the authentic. Frank Waters knows with clarity what he is writing about. So it is only because the book creates such hope and interest in the reader that it is likely to be disappointing to those who finish it. Yet at few points only does the story rise above its virtues and manage to hold the reader in its grip.

The book is really the chronicle of one life—that of Maria de la Valle. It sees her through a wild and amorous childhood to a position of responsibility in the community of her people and ultimately to a place of almost mythical importance. She becomes the leader of valley people living high in the Sangre de Cristo mountains of the Southwest. She is a leader because she knows her people and shares their simple passion for the land and for solid realities. The action of the story turns on the proposal of the Government to build a dam—a worthy project, for it will divert waters from flood sluices and save their homes. But to get the blessings of the Great White Father, they must surrender their land for pieces of paper. No es bueno. The dam is a stirring token of encroaching civilization, of a kind of progress that has some of the inevitability of doom. There is no holding out against it. Yet the people of the valley, under Maria's tutelage, know that it is somehow not good, that in accepting the benefits of the great project they are at the same time surrendering blessings that are older than man and cannot be surrendered too lightly.

The Spanish idiom of the book adds to its richness and will either irritate the untutored or delight those who have or may be acquiring a smattering of the language. The writing as a whole is good, though at times strained. Altogether it is a book which one cannot fail to enjoy. Any disappointment in it will probably be due to the fact that it stirs more interest than it satisfies.

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Kapstein . . .

SOMETHING OF A HERO. By I. J. Kapstein. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1941. 596 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by BESS JONES

MR. KAPSTEIN says unpretentiously that he tries in his novel to deal with the relationship between the struggle of people to make a living and the American creed. As he works his theme out he adheres steadily to his faith in his people though he hates their terrible betrayal of the creed. The creed itself is embodied most nearly in the character of John Cantrell, the veteran of the Civil War who, between the opening date of the novel, July 4, 1907, and its close some thirty-three years later, watches, interprets, and at times participates in the Cavalcade of America as exemplified in his home town of Persepolis. He is the firmly entrenched "native American" whose forebears first won, then pioneered, then, as his missing arm proclaims, rewon the United States. His family industry and bank still dominate the town. He is also its historian—the novel is throughout punctuated with long italicized, and quite dull sections from the book he is writing. In the end, he appears as the "something of a saint, something of a hero," which Santyana, who furnishes the title, declares the common citizen must be," if a noble and civilized democracy is to subsist."

Persepolis is America and America is Persepolis. Here are its virtues and its weaknesses, its victories and its defeats, its dreams and its realities, its conflicts and its reconciliations. Here the census discloses the normal quota of native whites, of first and second generation Germans, Poles, Armenians, Irish, Italians, Jews, of Negroes; engaged in the expected occupations or deflected from them, as the drive for money, for power, or for the conquest of frustrations dictates. Here, too, are the conflicts that make up American life: the overt or unexpressed clashes of race, of economic strata, of personal desires. And all of them are accentuated, not merely by what goes on in the book, but by what the reader knows of the period following its close— from 1930 to the present, when the American creed is facing its severest challenge simultaneously from within and without.

Mr. Kapstein writes warmly, with considerable drama, and with deep humanity, so that while his purpose and his spirit are altogether admirable, his technical devices often seem too mechanically contrived and his characters too much the types and not enough the individualized human beings. Nor is his structure always satisfactory in its proportions. It is hard, for example, to see why the ex-street car conductor Jack Smith and his girl friend Lily are given so much space. They are cheap, dull, and static. And though the colored boy Indie is one of the best characterizations in the novel, the prize fight he wins is too long drawn out, and his fantasy of a dream island is somewhat too repetitiously mentioned and too sentimentally treated.

Julian Green

I. J. Kapstein

Mr. Kapstein has written a serious, engagingly human book which deserves serious attention. It is five hundred and ninety-six pages long, however, and I suspect that it would have had far more drive and power if he had cut it down to four hundred. For a theme like his at a time like this sharpness, swiftness, and compactness are more effective than a leisurely pace and a general air of making sociology palatable.

Green . . .

THEN SHALL THE DUST RETURN. By Julian Green. Translated from the French by James Whitall. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1941. 290 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by KLAUS LAMBRECHT

IN his diaries Mr. Julian Green shows himself as a man who has created a world of his own, an area of living in the realm of metaphysics. Though having abandoned formal religion he is deeply religious, given to meditation and anxious to find his conception of life. As a writer of unusual qualities he is always able to bring his remote problems into the focus of our worldly minds.

His present novel again has its origin in the province of the recondite and mystic. The theme itself is simple enough, but it has the richness, the color, and the atmosphere of an ancient saga. Mr. Julian Green throughout his life has devoted much thought to the fact that human life almost always seems incomplete, that "a single lifetime does not seem sufficiently long for the accomplishment of a destiny," and so in his story he tries to follow through the centuries the fate of two people to its completion in our present time.

In a sense Mr. Green has written a love story, for these two people, being reborn in successive periods in the history of mankind, separated through fatal spell and crime, finally find themselves united, as the cycle closes. There is a symbol for their recognition, a token of heredity, that makes them sure of what they dimly feel: that they have just taken up their lives where in previous epochs they had lost them. This symbol is a simple metal chain, cast up one day by the sea and found by a young fisherboy on the coast of Wales. And from the dawn of time to the light of our age this chain goes through many hands, gets lost, turns up again, only to witness a brief spell in the reincarnated lives of the two people whose destinies are tied to it, until in the present day, bare now of its legendary magic powers, it again becomes the simple thing it was, an ancient chain of metal, one of the thousand exhibits in the British Museum at London.

Julian Green sees man as a fragmentary being in the space of time. He has written a timeless story that has the poetic qualities and the pure beauty of an old legend.

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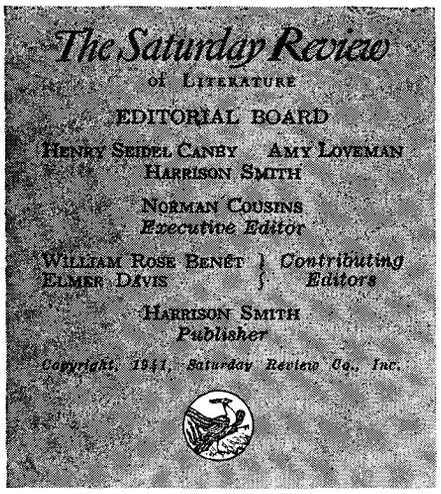

NEW DIMENSIONS IN INFORMATION

THERE has never been a time in the existence of the American nation when the people as a whole have been so well informed as they are at present as to the history of the European states which are at grips with one another. When the world conflict broke out in 1914, Americans as a body were lamentably ignorant of the long train of events which had antedated and led up to the holocaust and hardly less so of the politics and policies which immediately preceded the catastrophe. Newspaper coverage of foreign affairs outside New York and a few of the largest cities was practically non-existent and even the most important metropolitan dailies devoted only a meager few columns or often paragraphs to European happenings except when they flared into sudden dramatic crises. If the German Kaiser rattled his saber the papers reported it with ominous forecasts, but in between a telegram to Kruger and an Agadir incident important events could follow one another in the Reich, or, for that matter, in any other country, with nothing more than brief items tucked modestly away on inside pages to record them. There were foreign correspondents, of course, and there was a small fringe of travelled Americans who brought back from their journeyings abroad an uneasy sense of complications in European foreign relations, but on the whole the United States lived in an uninformed indifference to the strains in the European body politic. When war in the Balkans broke out in 1912 Americans probably saw in it more a fulfilment of the pessimism of Kipling's correspondent in "The Light That Failed" than of their own forebodings.

The World War changed all that. As one country after another went into the conflict, literature about the belligerent nations poured from the presses to be eagerly snatched by the public. The newspapers, in addition to printing thousands of columns upon immediate events, carried long historical surveys; colleges and schools laid increased stress on readings in European history; lecturers wove back and forth through the land delivering travelogues combining history with description, and books galore appeared upon all phases of Europe's past and present. The habit of European news formed by the newspapers between 1914 and 1918 has never since been broken, not even during the period of the false dawn which followed upon the Treaty of Paris. Ever since the war European news has maintained the position of importance it won during the struggle. And what has been true of journalism has been true of publishing in general.

But there has entered into the coverage of foreign news during the present conflict a new factor as important as it is excellent. No single agency has been more effective in the education of the public to the course and significance of events than the radio which, through its brief resumes put forth almost hourly and the lengthier interpretative comments which supplement them, has kept the world informed of the march of events almost as they happen. These rapid summaries are not hastily assembled announcements but painstakingly prepared surveys into which have gone hours of labor and the most scrupulous efforts for correctness. They are history, and accurate history even as they are written, a part, like newspaper correspondence, of the quarry out of which the standard histories of the future will be hewn. The scholar of tomorrow, like the listener of today, will find in these reports written close to the scene but put through a careful sieve of checking, not only the happenings of the war years but the hopes, the fears, the conjectures, the determination, the heroic resolve of the peoples whose daily agony is being retailed. That even out of the propaganda-ridden countries neutral broadcasters can send reliable reports is proved by the work of such men as William Shirer and others in the Axis nations. And how vivid and accurate a portrayal the radio can present at its best such a book as the recent one by Edward Murrow, CBS correspondent in London, makes amply evident. Compiled from broadcasts delivered almost as they now appear in print, this volume is history in the best sense of the word, accurate, revealing, and discriminating. Radio reporting, under the stress of a strict allotment of time, has become an art in which economy of language is the highest desideratum, and selection and compression of news a necessity. Stripped of all save significant fact as these broadcasts are, they should furnish the research scholar of the future with what is virtually a syllabus for any extensive work on which he may launch. It is to be hoped that the radio companies are preserving these invaluable records in such form as to make them usable when that happy day comes when their chronicles will be not news but history.

A. L.

Eight Doves

By Jane Dransfield

ABOVE the housetops eight doves fly,
And these eight doves can never die.

Now far apart, now close as one,
Eight pigeons circle in the sun;

They come to rest upon a roof,
And to the eight each one gives proof.

But when they wheel within the wide,
They neither add, nor yet divide;

They are not one, they are not eight,
They are this verse in which I state

That eight doves circle in the sun,
Now far apart, now close as one.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Coincidental Commentaries

SIR:—To the roll-call of prophets of the present war can be added the names of two Americans, Woodrow Wilson and Brooks Adams.

In 1920 Wilson must be thought to have foreseen the recent conquest of Europe when he warned us: "If we keep out of this agreement, if we refuse to join in underwriting the peace of civilization, then a fresh attempt will be made to crush the small new nations of Europe." As he must also be thought to have foreseen our current colossal armament outlay in the same year when he declared: "Isolated we may some day be indeed; and not because we wish to be. When that day comes we shall have to arm to the teeth to preserve our existence."

Adams' prophecies occur in his "America's Economic Supremacy" which was published in 1900. Applicable almost equally to the first World War and to its renewal, they predict an assault upon Britain by a Continental Coalition formed for that purpose, and show the inevitability of our becoming involved as an ally of Britain. Many of Adams' images fit the current pattern closely enough to have been written only yesterday, not forty years ago. It should be added that at the close of the last War he predicted its renewal "within at furthest a single generation."

Of especial interest is his prevision of our relation to an embattled England. "The support of the United States," he wrote, "may thus be said to be essential to Britain who, without it, if attacked by a Continental Coalition would be forced to capitulate. . . . Great Britain may not inaptly be described as a fortified outpost of the Anglo-Saxon race overlooking the Eastern Continent and resting on America. . . . But if the support of the United States is essential to England, England is essential to the United States in the face of foes who fear and hate us and who but for her would already have their fleets upon our shores. Whether they like it or not, therefore, economic exigencies seem likely to constrain Englishmen and Americans to combine for their own safety and possibly hesitancy as to this policy may be as dangerous as indecision in war."

For accurate blue-printing of the tides of history, this would seem to take high rank.

G. R. GARRETT.

New York City.

C. Morley and W. Shakespeare

SIR:—Of course Webster's unabridged dictionary may be at fault or perhaps Christopher Morley in observing Shakespeare's birthday wished us to understand that when the question of vocabulary was considered he knows as many words as the author of "The Tempest," himself—even if he has to fabricate them out of his own head. Or, perhaps, Mr. Morley, like the late Jay House, believes "when I use a word that makes it correct."

What confuses me are the words "nembutal" and "metagrobolize." Heretofore when I have found strange, mysterious words that have been penned by Mr. Morley I have merely shaken my head and, too lazy to go to the dictionary, remarked to myself "that young man won't go far if he doesn't stop that kind of talk."

But "nembutal" and "metagrobolize" fascinated me. How, I thought, I could knock 'em cold (or put them to sleep) at the club by nonchalantly handing them a dose of nembutal. Would that not metagrobolize them! So I went to Webster and the words were not there.

Will you not tell Mr. Morley that I have a book containing his Haverford writings and if he doesn't stop pulling this funny business I shall take steps to expose him?

WM. A. MACAN.

Bala-Cynwyd, Pa.

"He edits the *Gory Gazette*."

NOTE TO MR. MACAN:—You will find "metagrobolize" in the *complete* Webster (in the foot of the page section reserved for unusual words). It will give you an excuse to read some of Rabelais, who invented it.

In re "nembutal," visit your nearest drugstore.

Good old Bala-Cynwyd: I suppose you noticed it made a dent on the memory of Miss Foyle?

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

"How Poetry Is Published"

SIR:—Apropos of your excellent article, "How Poetry is Published" [*SRL*, Mar. 15], I do wish to say through your paper a word in praise of Louis Untermeyer's anthology, "The New Modern American and British Poetry." The selections from the various poets together with the concise biographic sketches are most representative and revealing. The notes which take the form of further enjoyment of Poetry, are most helpful and suggestive and I feel are sure to do real missionary work in the appreciation of poetry, discriminating between the good and the poor product and, above all, in driving us to poetry as a panacea in time of stress, in sorrow, anxiety, and other ills to which moral man is subject.

I have been using Mr. Untermeyer's book for several months with an adult class in the study of poetry. In preparing the lessons for my class each week I feel an increasing admiration and gratitude for the book. For a long time I have had a deep desire to express these feelings to Mr. Untermeyer for this most satisfactory and inspiring anthology. My right to speak in judgment on such a book is backed by more than fifty years of adult class work in the study of poetry. It gives me great pleasure to recommend this book for use of adult classes.

JENNIE ELLIS KEYSOR.

Kirkwood, Mo.

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G. P. Putnam's Sons

In Publishing for Business

EDITH M. STERN

Major George Haven Putnam headed the publishing house founded by his father for fifty-eight years.

WHEN you step out of the elevator on the second floor in a building on 45th Street, just west of Fifth Avenue, and enter the conventionally furnished reception room of G. P. Putnam's Sons, one of the first things that catches your eye is a framed certificate of membership in the Merchants' Association. There are no attempts to create atmosphere with sentimental evocations of more than a century of publishing; the latest Putnam titles aren't strewn about the anteroom nor first editions of James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving exhibited in glass cases. And as you proceed through a maze of corridors and close-packed, paper-laden offices, to the tune of clacking typewriters, the impression of a business firm stripped for action is reinforced.

Melville Minton and Earle H. Balch, who merged their firm of Minton, Balch and Company with Putnam's in 1930, are chronologically, at least, among the "younger publishers" who mushroomed pyrotechnically during the 1920's; psychologically, they were not. President Minton had been selling for Charles Scribner's Sons ever since he had left school in Red Bank, New Jersey. Vice-president Balch, via the University of Minnesota and Harvard, had had his previous publishing experience right in the editorial department of the house of which he is now editor-in-chief. Except for taking up the defense of "The United States vs. Married Love" in 1931, which made possible the circulation of Marie Stopes's steady seller in this country, the new owners of the old house no more set out to slay Mrs. Grundy than their bearded forerunners.

The two partners, who complement each other in both personality and abilities, smoothly carry on a heritage that is a mixture of sound business and editorial discrimination. George Palmer Putnam, their spiritual ancestor and founder of the firm, began his energetic career in 1829 as employee in a small New York bookstore, at the munificent salary of twenty-five dollars a year and maintenance. Subsequently he sold for a Boston publisher; compiled an Index to Universal History and a monthly register of new publications while he was still in his teens; invested $150 to become a partner in the publishing house of Wiley and Long in 1833; staged the first Book and Author dinner in 1837; and next year, with the firm's name changed to Wiley and Putnam, went to London, where he established the first American publishing branch in England. In 1847, while in London, he gave a stranded American printer, Bayard Taylor, some temporary clerical work to relieve his financial distress; this resulted in the acquisition of a first-rate publishing property, for Taylor's book of travels, issued next year, sold more than 100,000 copies during forty years, and new Taylor volumes met with continued popularity.

When George Putnam returned to America in 1848, Wiley and Putnam were dissolved, and the firm name became George P. Putnam. His next editorial coup was represented by the works of Washington Irving. The writer's works had been three years out of print, because his Philadelphia publishers didn't consider them of "permanent value." Irving, desperate, was ready to turn to some other means of making a living, when Putnam offered him a proposition which, for the time, was a miracle of generosity. At about the same time, Hawthorne's "Mosses from an Old Manse" and Lowell's "Fable for Critics" came out under the Putnam imprint to the greater glory of the list and of American letters. A short-lived monthly, which went under in the panic of 1857, numbered Longfellow, Emerson, and Bryant among its contributors.

But publishers don't survive by literature alone, and in the mid-nineteenth century the "Gone With the Wind" of its day was on the Putnam list. In 1850 a weighty manuscript was submitted by one Susan Warner, who used the pen name of Elizabeth Wetherell. Putnam's manuscript readers advised against publication, but his mother read and liked the novel. "My son," she urged, "if you never publish another book, publish this! Providence will provide!" The book was "The Wide Wide World" and Providence did provide. After weeks of meager sales, the first enthusiastic review was from a Providence, R. I., newspaper; the first large order from a Sunday School in the same town. After that, sales leaped to 40,000 in a few months, and ultimately topped a million. Miss Warner's later novel, "Queechy," was almost as successful.

Six years before his father died, in 1866, George Haven Putnam, Major in the Civil War, entered the business and headed it for fifty-eight years. With the advent of other Putnam sons the firm again changed its name, this time permanently to G. P. Putnam's Sons. Like his father, the Major lived twenty-five hours a day. He wrote books on the copyright law; he made sixty-five trans-Atlantic crossings; he was active in civic affairs. It was he who urged young Theodore Roosevelt to run for the New York State Assembly. For a while Roosevelt was a special partner in the firm: he offered many ebullient suggestions, few of them practical, but at least he did contribute "The Naval War of 1812" and several other books to the list. Under the Major's regime Frank Crowninshield and Burges Johnson were both Putnam employees; the first modern-type detective story, by Anna Katharine Green, was published in 1878; and balance sheets in the early 1900's were sweetened in more ways than one by the novels of Myrtle Reed and of Florence Barclay, whose "The Rosary"—personally guaranteed by Mrs. Putnam—sold over a million.

George Palmer Putnam, a grandson of the founder (one of five grandsons to serve at various times with the firm) began an association with Putnam in 1918 that was responsible for many of the books of adventure and exploration that appeared on the list, among them Lindbergh's "We," the series of "boys' books by boys," and the works of William Beebe, Martin Johnson, and Rockwell Kent.

When Major Putnam died in 1930, the family invited Minton and Balch to take over. They brought with them

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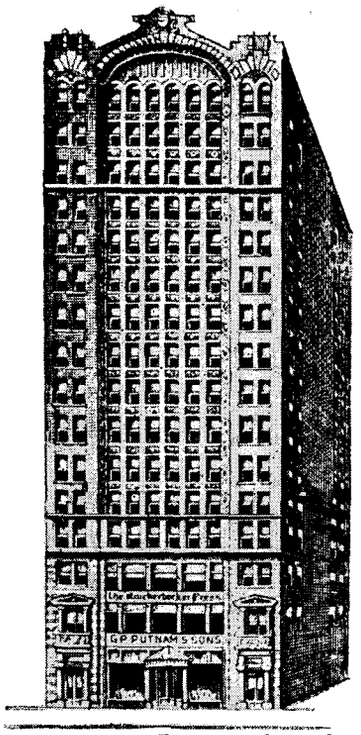
the works of John Dewey, the novels of Alice Grant Rosman, and a number of juveniles, still, today, marked MB in the Putnam catalogue. Their staff includes both pre- and post-MB personalities. Frederick A. MacGillivray, editorial advisor, is its oldest member; he came to the firm in 1890. John W. Sommer, salesman, joined in 1902. Robert F. Vermell, manager of the production department, has been there since 1904. Ruth S. Yetter came to Putnam's in 1927 to head an educational department that follows up the publication of the first American book on nursing in 1878 by specializing in histories and texts on nursing. G. Theodore Zignone, treasurer and secretary, joined the staff in 1929; Quentin Bossi, sales manager and athlete, in 1931. Clarence B. Boutell, advertising manager, arrived at Putnam's in 1937 by way of the Tecolote Book Shop in Santa Barbara, Calif., Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., and *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

F. H. Hettinger, who was with Charles Scribner's Sons for 21 years and then with Minton, Balch, is now a member of Putnam's Board of Directors. Edgar W. Porter, Dean of American Book Travelers, represents the house on the Pacific Coast and originally came to publishing from bookselling. James V. Malloy, who has been a book salesman for 36 years, has been with Putnam's for the last nine, and now covers Boston, the larger cities in Northern New England, and the Middle West.

Kennett L. Rawson worked in the editorial department in 1936 and next year became editor. Aside from a Yale degree in 1933, his prerequisites for occupying an editor's chair are probably unique. Rawson held important jobs both on Macmillan's arctic and Byrd's second antarctic expeditions: he is the author of "A Boy's Eye View of the Arctic," and collaborator with Admiral Byrd on the section on the physical nature of Antarctica in the 1938 Encyclopoedia Britannica Yearbook.

RAWSON'S past does not indicate the only evidence of wanderlust in the stable old house, for its list is strong on travel books and includes the works of Admiral Byrd, William Beebe, and Roy Chapman Andrews. Characteristic among its publications, too, are numerous solid, expensive volumes, never discussed by lady lecturers nor demanded by circulating library members, but which run along steadily with a quiet and profitable sale to individuals and institutions. There are, for instance, histories of the Marine Corps, the Army, and the Navy; a series of field books; opera books; and such authoritative, specialized works as "The Franciscan Missions of California" at $3.75 or "The Mammals of China and Mongolia," of which Volume XI, Part Two, costs $10.00.



—From an old line drawing.

G. P. Putnam's Sons still have their offices in this historic publishing building at 2 West 45th Street, in New York City.

From the beginning the Putnam Bookstore was identified with the publishing firm, and for many years was under the management of Irving Putnam, the Major's brother. Since 1933, however, the bookstore has been under separate ownership.

Current magnum opus of the house is Winston Churchill's "Blood, Sweat and Tears," May Book-of-the-Month Club selection. Its success is not merely fortuitous, because of world circumstances, but a combination of vision and plugging. Before publication, Bossi organized "Churchill Clubs" with memberships of one hundred, two hundred and fifty, or five hundred—each membership representing an advance order, and prizes for the dealers and clerks bringing in the most members. As a result, twenty-five leading book dealers averaged 353 advance orders from customers before release date. That Putnam's had the book to sell, however, was an editorial triumph. Some years before Churchill was a member of the cabinet, several publishers had turned down his "Great Contemporaries"—twenty-one portraits of world figures, one of them a man named Adolph Hitler. Putnam's took the book, partly on the vague possibility of a similar volume on American personalities, partly on faith in Churchill's future—Boutell, for one, prophesied that he "would be Prime Minister some day." "Step by Step" came next, and then the current best seller's predecessor, "While England Slept." Originally its title was "Arms and the Covenant," and Putnam's asked for a snappier substitute. When it came up at editorial meeting as "The Lotus Years," everyone decided that was even worse, and diligently worked on a better and effective "While England Slept." Not until after publication was it discovered that a London representative had happily misunderstood the second suggested title; the word, it transpired, had been Locust, not Lotus.

Nevile Henderson's title, "Failure of a Mission," which breaks every publishing kind of Hoyle in being negative—and is perfect—is, on the other hand, his own. Nor is he on the Putnam list by natural progression from previous writings. The work was editorially conceived in the New York office, and when he was asked to write the book, he demurred. His Majesty's Ambassadors didn't publish their experiences; it simply wasn't done. Finally the London agent prevailed upon him to write his story.

When it comes to fiction, however, Earle Balch disapproves of editorially conceived books. "I like a book to pour out," he told me. "I'm sure, for instance, that Sholem Asch was thinking out 'The Nazarene' all his life. And Allen Tate said, 'I want to write a biography of Stonewall Jackson.' The best books come that way."

In such an attitude, as every author knows, there is dignity, sincerity, and sensitivity. And though Melville Minton assured me vehemently that he was primarily interested in the profit element in publishing, he, too, is unmistakably one of G. P. Putnam's and the Major's "sons."

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Marmion.
2. Sam McGee.
3. Gerald O'Hara.
4. Oliver Twist.
5. Lady Macbeth.
6. Hamlet.
7. Mrs. Gummidge
8. Sir Galahad.
9. Casey Jones.
10. Mike Flannery.
11. Tiny Tim.
12. Richard III.
13. Ali Baba.
14. Topsy.
15. Shylock.
16. Little Orphan Annie.
17. Priscilla.
18. The Ancient Mariner.
19. Puck.
20. Portia.

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Reading for Defense

WHAT THE CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE NAVY. By Hanson W. Baldwin. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1941. 219 *pp., with index.* $2.

WHAT THE CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ARMY. By Harvey S. Ford. The same. 1941. 230 *pp., with index.* $2.

WHAT THE CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE COAST GUARD. By Hickman Powell. The same. 1941. 194 *pp., with index.* $2.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

WITH these three volumes the house of Norton announces its entry into the field of military publishing. It is a perilous enterprise, but the house is to be congratulated. It has collected three men of real ability under the same tent and opened its new circus with a star performer in each ring. No better general pictures of the armed services have appeared or are likely to; and at least two of the volumes will probably remain standard works for some time.

If Mr. Ford's army book is an exception to the last statement, it is not his fault, but that of the present state of our national military development, which has thrown our whole army setup into a state of flux while that arm is being explanded from an "initial protective force" of under 200,000 men to a mass machine of ten times that number. Mr. Ford copes with the difficulties of the situation as well as anyone could. He tells about the arms—infantry, cavalry—and what their functions are in modern war; he talks of the supporting services, such as the quartermaster corps; the officers and men.

But he does not illustrate the shoulder-patches of the various divisions, for example. He cannot; there are new ones every day, and not even the Washington authorities are sure what they all look like. He does not describe the tactical organization of a U. S. division in the field. He cannot; the big shots of the General Staff have not yet decided what it is to be.

By contrast the information in Hickman Powell's Coast Guard book is as established as the orbit of a major planet. The Coast Guard has changed in nothing but mechanical equipment since it was founded by Alexander Hamilton, and shows no sign of future change, for it has functioned throughout the history of the republic with an enviable efficiency. It is unique in national services; does so many things of more than municipal value—in meteorology and iceberg patrol, for example—that it has attained the startling position of an armed force of the United States whose expenses are partly paid by grateful foreign powers. Mr. Powell brings out the nature of these services rendered and of the men who render them; and since the Coast Guard is, after all, a small force, he has room in his book for illustrative anecdotes that make it, as pure reading matter, the best of the three.

Which is by no means a disparagement of Hanson Baldwin's outstanding job on the navy. If a chatty book, full of clever anecdotes, were to be written about that service, nobody could do it better than Mr. Baldwin. He knows the service inside and out, and in this volume, he has chosen to convey in a small space a large amount of what he knows, rather than to assume knowledge on the part of the reader and to be amusing on a basis of mutual acquaintance.

The ships—what they cost and look like, where they are built, what their functions are; the officers—how they are trained, what their duties are, their pay and prospects; the men—their daily life and hopes; the airplanes; the fleet—how it conducts operations of tactics and strategy, all these are the matters covered by Mr. Baldwin.

He has over Mr. Ford the advantage of dealing with an M-day force—that is, one that will not be altered by war, save through the multiplication table. But he also has over most writers two advantages that owe nothing to the subject. He has an English prose style that allows him to be informative without didacticism, and energetic without inaccuracy; and he has a mind which allows him to hunt the essential fact through forests of detail and bring it back alive.

(From "America & Total War," by Fletcher Pratt.)

Curtiss P-40's

The Tightened Belt

IF WAR COMES TO THE AMERICAN HOME. By S. F. Porter. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1941. 304 *pp., with index.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PALMER HARMAN

THE average non-combatant American did not fare so badly during the first World War. There were meatless and heatless days, which nobody took too grimly. The cost of living soared, but so did the national income. As compensation for the strain and the overtime work there were the silk skirts and the stock market where "war babies" beckoned toward riches.

How will it be this time? This is the question which Mrs. Porter tries to answer in her book. She, like most thoughtful people, believes that the pattern will not be repeated. Yes, there will be a boom—more people at work, more money paid out in wages. But more of the flood of circulating money will be sluiced through the United States Treasury, where a large part of it will be drained off as taxes. The government will keep a tighter rein on production, business men will be told what they may do, the line between profits and profiteering will be drawn at a lower level.

All this means a lower standard of living if Mrs. Porter is right—and she probably is. But it is a complicated question and the answer depends largely on how well we use our resources. We have the man power and machine power to turn out a great deal more than we did a quarter-century ago, and men and machines cannot be absorbed in war industries in a week or a month. Meantime, they might be producing the things which everybody wants, postponing the pinch on living standards, and at the same time producing some extra dollars for Mr. Morgenthau. But the general productive machine was running rather feebly before we launched our defense and lend-lease program and there is not much reason to believe that it will be greatly speeded up, only to be taken apart a little later and transferred to military work.

Faced with this prospect, the American family will need to prepare as best it can for what is coming. Here is a situation to think about, and Mrs. Porter raises the questions and suggests some answers, which the reader may accept or reject according to his lights. The book deals with a vital concern of the American home, to which most people have given too little consideration. Harry Scherman provides an informative introduction.

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History and Liberty

HISTORY AS THE STORY OF LIBERTY. By Benedetto Croce. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1941. 324 *pp., with index.* $3.75.

Reviewed by JACQUES BARZUN

THOUGH the title of this book does not promise more than the book itself fulfills, it is not likely that the casual reader who is attracted by the subject will find at once what he is looking for. As the "story of liberty" Croce has not given us the biography of emancipators nor a chronicle of parliaments; he has written a work of philosophy which sums up fifty years of research and speculation, and which completes his system by showing in great detail that history is nothing else than the free spirit of man in action.

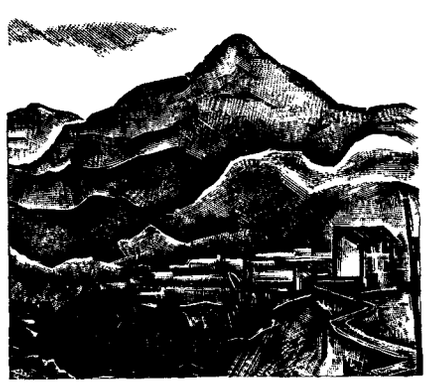
Abstractly put, this thesis sounds either like a platitude or a riddle, but for Croce and his assiduous reader it means a multitude of definitions, distinctions, perspectives, and conclusions about the universe of fact and thought. I say assiduous reader, for the book is one to study rather than read, even though it is possible at a first glance to see the many practical ways in which Croce's philosophy "makes a difference." This is no doubt what led the English reviewers who are quoted on the jacket to say that the "greatest living Italian" was "striking a blow for freedom" and uttering the "principles" for which Great Britain now fights.

What Croce has actually done is to compose and arrange in a sort of contrapuntal order some fifty very brief essays on as many aspects of history and historiography. For him these two words have a special meaning. History is not the past, nor any book about a fragment of the past; it is the moral conscience of the world aware of itself and bringing forth fruits. Historiography, on the other hand, consists in answering true historical questions in the light of knowledge, passion, and the desire for truth, as well as with a view to action in the present, that is, a view to the making of further history. History is not an external reality copied or fished up out of records by an "impartial" scholar: it is the sum of existence fully present at any moment of spiritual creation. It follows that for Croce many books of history are not histories at all but what he calls chronicles or anecdotes or party pamphlets. Even more concretely important is his showing us why histories of the usual "scientific," materialistic, evolutionist, Marxist, racialist, or nationalist pattern are not only not true histories, but are from their very rigidity alien to the very being of history. His gentle demolition of the work and reputation of Taine, whom he chooses as the exemplar of pseudo-scientific history, is an admirable and irrefutable performance.

How political liberty, the equality of men as men, the inexpugnability of the moral law, the nature of free choice, and the false hopes and fears entertained about modern Europe, are related to Croce's exposition of his pragmatic idealism cannot be indicated here. The quantity of his *aperçus* would require an essay to reproduce even in bare outline, while the allusiveness of his method—at times much like Bergson's—would make the discussion of certain doubtful or debatable points imperative. The book is a great book and is not to be gulped down whole.

For the benefit of the thoughtful reader who may want to gain familiarity with Croce's conclusions without testing their linkage with basic principles, a further word must be said: first, rather than start on Page one, begin with Part III, "Historiography and Politics," and read to the end of the book. Next, try to recast as you go the pidgin English with which the translator has disguised Croce's honest prose. Croce has never had luck with English translators, which is one reason why he is, at 75, relatively little known where English is spoken. But his latest interpreter is surely the worst: she will repeatedly puzzle your brains with phrases like "eighteenth-century Illuminism" until it flashes upon you, through no illumination of her own, that she means simply the Enlightenment; she writes "otherwise said" for "in other words," and her sentence structure, neither contrived nor casual, is as slovenly as the proofreading. But in spite of all obstacles, I say again, Read Croce on History.

Jacques Barzun is the author of "Darwin, Marx, Wagner—Critique of A Heritage," and "Of Human Freedom."



The Bloomsbury Life

LIVING IN BLOOMSBURY. By Thomas Burke. New York: W. W. Norton. 1941. 361 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by R. ELLIS ROBERTS

I HAVE never had the limits of Bloomsbury precisely defined: nor does Mr. Burke, who lives (lived? for who knows what has happened to any one home?) in Torrington Square, attempt to define them. His charming, rambling book takes small store in topographical information: Bloomsbury is, after all, a parish—it includes part at any rate of Gower Street, and it ends somewhere north of Lincoln's Inn. Its next neighbor is Holborn, and St. Giles in the Fields—once London's Bowery—jostles it on another side. Its chief claim to our attention is the lovely Palladian parish-church of St. George, which Mr. Burke never seems to have noticed, some noble houses in lovely squares (Bedford, Russell, Tavistock, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Woburn, Gordon), certain famous inhabitants—past and present—the British Museum, and new buildings of the University of London.

Mr. Burke lives in Bloomsbury because he likes living in London, preferring solitariness and a few friends to the intense sociability of the English village. If one wishes to live in London the wise man will try, in this order, to secure a home in (a) one of the Inns of Court (b) a Bloomsbury Square (c) Mayfair. That is, of course, before Mr. Hitler decides that, whatever else is destroyed, he must if possible destroy the abode of English law, which abuts on and overruns into Bloomsbury. Mr. Burke's book of recollections was written before inequity dived from the air; dust had not closed Themis's eye, nor was the kerchief over the eyes of Justice stained with blood and grime. So "Living in Bloomsbury" is at once a sad and a gay book. Sad if the reader who knows the district dwells on the destruction wrought there, gay if he remembers that nothing can destroy the spirit which has made the district memorable, and makes Mr. Burke's book delightful. This is a leisurely, very English book to be treasured by those who prefer good wine to quick-firing cocktails. Only in one thing is Mr. Burke monstrously and eccentrically heretical. I can forgive him for not caring for the theatre or for actors; it's stupid of him, to my mind, who enjoy plays and delight in the company of mummers. But to denigrate the theatre and to praise opera! —that is not stupidity but a notifiable disease.

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THE BIGGEST LITERARY SHOW IN AMERICA

(*Continued from page 4*)

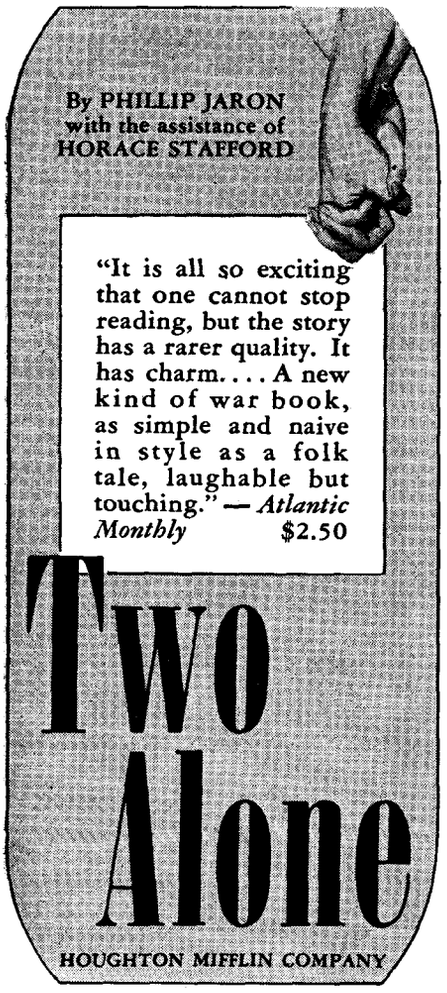
titles most in demand the Reference Department has comparatively few duplicates. Founded and maintained as a working research library it must have all of its books available at all times and cannot, therefore, let them go out of the building.

For those who are interested in early printing the Library can produce the Gutenberg and other famous Bibles; the Bay Psalm Book, first book printed in what is now the United States, and books from most of the first presses in Europe, Mexico, and South America.

Voyages and discoveries? Here are the contemporary records, including the only known copy of the first printing of Columbus's letter announcing the discovery of America.

American history? Here are the printed records of the period from Columbus to Coronado; the Jesuit "Relations"; colonial records; Tom Paine; Washington's manuscript of his Farewell Address and its first and subsequent printings.

French Revolution? The Library has thousands of contemporary pamphlets, broadsides, decrees.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American biography? Here, in full length studies, biographical dictionaries, society, association, college and city directories, muster rolls, and other lists in print and manuscript are records of millions upon millions of persons, from the Indians to the present refugees.

Aviation? A selected list published in 1938 cites 5,574 references to material in the Library.

There are few scales large enough to measure this reference collection. In all New York libraries, public, academic, private, there are about 6,000,000 titles. The majority of the half not in The New York Public Library are in the libraries of the American Medical Association, the Bar Association, and the Union Theological Seminary which collect in fields the Library does not attempt to cover.

In size, the whole library (Reference and Circulation) is second to the Library of Congress in the United States and is smaller than the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Leningrad Library. It has only a few thousand more volumes than the combined libraries of Harvard University.

All of these are deposit libraries, to which books come but from which, unless they are unnecessary duplicates, they never go. As such, they tend to follow the mysterious laws of compound interest and double in size every twenty years. The Reference Department of the New York Public Library has done somewhat better than that, for it started in 1895 with 350,000 volumes and an annual income of about $160,000.

The increase in the Library's usefulness as its collections and services have expanded is due to the generosity of those who have supported its work with gifts of money and books. Great as its present resources are, they are inadequate to the demands made upon them.

A notable recent addition to the Library's storehouse of literary treasures was the Owen D. Young collection of rare books, autograph letters, manuscripts, original drawings and sketches—given jointly by Mr. Young and Dr. Albert A. Berg. The collection is rich in fine examples of early English and Elizabethan printing and is particularly strong in rare American and English editions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It contains, also, a wealth of manuscript material, the major portion of it unpublished, from the hands of famous authors. The books and papers will be added to the Library's Berg Collection.

Director of the New York Public Library is Dr. Henry M. Lydenberg, who is a man of letters himself in addition to being a skilled executive. Dr. Lydenberg's administration has been in the best scholarly and literary traditions of Joseph Green Cogswell and Wilberforce Eames, his predecessors in the Director's chair.

THE Library has grown, in both size and use, beyond the expectation of those who planned the building. Years ago it was crowded beyond normal capacity. Now the limits of makeshifts and expedients, the "entrails in the public halls" that Lewis Mumford deplores, have been passed also. To make room, 33,000 bound volumes of newspapers are now being moved out of the building to an annex on Twenty-fifth Street where they will be available for research, but not for general use. Additional space must be provided or some day soon one additional book will make the whole place jell.

The catalogues, 20,000,000 cards in all, are the accumulation of many years. None of the earliest cards is still in use but there are many survivals from the Astor and Lenox libraries and later ones reflect the changes in catalogue practice during the last half century. The consequent lack of consistency is sometimes disturbing, but to replace some millions

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of older cards at an average cost of twenty-five cents each would involve a thumping and impossible sum.

The Library tries to meet average requirements, hoping their detail will not prove too serious an obstacle to casual use, sure that lack of minute description will not hamper the scholar.

A typographical error may disfigure a book, but it can ruin a catalogue entry. An omitted umlaut might put one several thousand cards away from its proper place. The reader may not care whether an author spells his name Brown or Browne, but if he wants to find his book he'd better be sure, or look under both, for Thomas Brown and Thomas Browne are 4,000 cards apart.

EVERY newspaper headline, every shift in the political, social, economic scene, will bring hundreds of readers. Today, and every day for months past, hundreds of books are called for in connection with problems related to national defense. Men learning new trades or reviving old skills want practical books on machines and tools; they want to learn about new materials and methods of handling them; they want books on gas engines, airplane construction, the marine trades. Patents are searched by the inventors of munitions, ordnance, torpedo motor boats, tanks.

Engineers want standard works and current technical journals. Plans of cantonments, the technique of blackouts, construction of shelters, the organization of civilian forces, are studied.

Through its Circulation Department the Library lends 2,000 technical books to students in special defense courses, and publishes the list, 254 titles, for the use of schools and libraries throughout the country.

It studies in detail its own procedure in the event of air raids; formulates a policy of leave of absence without loss of benefits for members of its staff called to military service.

The drums beat to quarters, and the Library is ready, its books and services on call.

General Hugh Mercer

WITH SWORD AND LANCET: The Life of General Hugh Mercer. By Joseph M. Waterman. Richmond: Garrett & Massie. 1941. XIII. 177 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by FRANK MONAGHAN

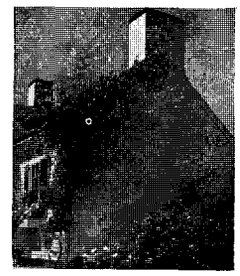
THIS is an odd, but valuable contribution to our knowledge of the personalities of the American Revolution. When it comes, as it should and will, to the attentions of the professional historians of the eighteenth-century in America they will doubtless be astonished and amused by the author's lack of technical training (so abundantly revealed in the notes and the bibliography). This detection hardly demands the scrutiny of a trained historian. The general reader will be somewhat puzzled in approaching the volume, because it is not very readable. Basically it is a collection of documents and other quotations with connecting remarks.

In spite of these remarks the volume represents an interesting and worthy effort. The author has obviously spent a vast amount of time in collecting his materials and he quotes them fully (with accuracy, if not with artistic skill). Mercer was a rebel in Scotland who finally came to the American colonies; here he served Braddock's expedition, was a frontier physician, became the commandant of Fort Pitt, retired to the life of a gentleman and doctor in Fredericksburg. The Revolution called him to martial duties once again and he died, with a rare display of courage, near Princeton where his memory is now commemorated in the Battle Monument. More than five separate British bayonet thrusts were required to dispatch General Mercer, who the British soldiers thought was General Washington. Mercer was ever obstinate and determined; he lingered on several weeks after these mortal wounds. Mr. Waterman's biography will enable the memory of Mercer to linger on and on.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE TRIAL OF VINCENT DOON *Will Oursler* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Stabbing-suspect artist, apparently doomed by circumstantial evidence, saved after sharp courtroom battle.	Legal give-and-take pleasant relief from normal mystery story procedure. Pictures add reality to affair.	Unusual
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE—8 *Van Wyck Mason* (Stokes: $2.50)	Omnibus volume of Hugh North stories, revealing hideous plans of assorted enemy spies and their discomfiture.	"Washington Legation Murders," "Hongkong Airbase ditto" and "Singapore Exile same"—all worth re-reading.	Spy-stuff



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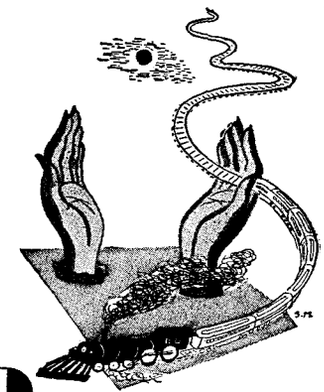

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Back to Pope

THE DOUBLE MAN. By W. H. Auden. New York: Random House. 1941. 141 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

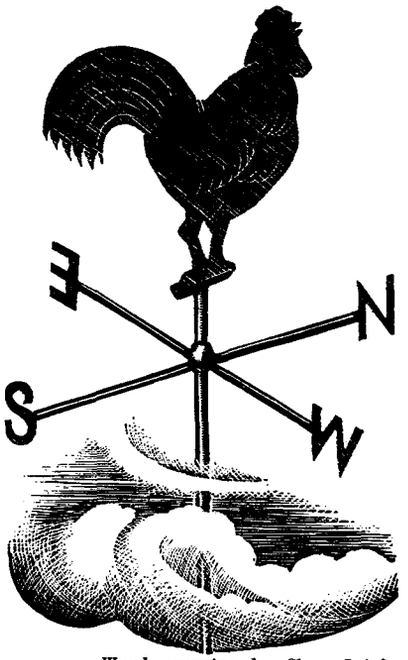
ALLOWING for differences from the critical minority, it must be apparent that W. H. Auden at thirty-four is the most surprising poet now writing in English. His virtuosity is incontestable, as astonishing in range as it is sparkling in performance. There is no form too loose or too restricted for him; he is perhaps the only living poet who can really express himself in a sestina. But Auden is not versatile for the sake of versatility; he is spectacular for a purpose. He is attempting to speak as the completely modern poet—serious and sensational, helpless and hopeful, caught between experience and intuition—the poet who is the multiple man. His sensibility is all the more affecting because it is the record of ambivalence. Hesitating between tradition and revolution, between a world whose values he distrusts and a world whose designs he cannot discern, he dwells alternately in both. It is this ambivalence, beautifully communicated, which hypnotizes the readers with a sense of estrangement even when Auden celebrates companionship, of universal disorder beneath the conscious order. Not the least of Auden's triumphs is the way he can mingle incongruities and make them seem not only logical but inevitable. He is equally himself in metaphysical meditation and popular, even "vulgar," ballads; he can mingle plain speech and oratory without changing his tone.

"The Double Man" displays the multiple Auden: the bravura performer and the careful craftsman, the lively iconoclast and the studious wit. "The Double Man" is a poem of some seventeen hundred lines which is already being hailed as a phenomenon, a landmark, a Return to Order. The most experimental of contemporary poets has gone to school to Pope, and the result of his exercise in discipline may be a turning-point for the 1940s, the long-awaited and reasoned reply to the Wastelanders.

It is not quite a great poem. In spite of the far-ranging couplets and the air of clarity, it does not (manifestly cannot) resolve the poet's confusions. It persuades, but it does not overpower. Nevertheless, the poem is unified by adherence to the motto from Montaigne: "We are, I know not how, double in ourselves; so that what we believe we disbelieve, and cannot rid ourselves of what we condemn." Moreover, it is brilliant in its parts. Auden's customary vigor attains a new strength, even a nobility, in the passages begining "Great masters who have shown mankind," "When unity has come to grief," "Yet maps and languages and names," "However we decide to act," and the concluding:

> And Love illuminates again
> The city and the lion's den,
> The world's great rage, the travel
> of young men.

The long poem, reinforced by the notes, points Auden's continued efforts toward exactness of statement supporting the suggestive allusion. This, it seems to me, also explains what has struck many commentators as curious: the spectacle of an ultra-modern poet employing not only the clipped Popeian couplet, but the far more academic (and usually trivial) French forms, even such strict patterns as the rondeau and villanelle. The appended Notes take up almost twice as many pages as the poem. They are a complement, rather than a continuation, a carry-all of teasing definitions, interpolated (and vaguely "appropriate") poems, vivid quotations, straight-faced and impudent anecdotes, gossip from behind the front, quiet parables and loud jokes. Rarely has a poet shown himself in so many moods, from the devil-may-care to the didactic, from the nimble to the austere; rarely has a long poem been so interesting in treatment, so exciting in effect.



Wood-engraving by Clare Leighton from "Under the Greenwood Tree."

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The Poetry of Conflict

FEAR NO MORE. A Book of Poems for the Present Times by Living Poets. New York: Cambridge University Press (Macmillan). 1941. 96 *pp.* $1.25.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

THIS collection of poems by unnamed English poets has a twofold interest. First, as poetry, it is for the most part on a high level; clean, well-turned, conventional lyrics concerned largely with the English scene—the pastoral England of "Grantchester." It is poetry based on the deep-rooted verities of Nature, which even a world in conflict does not destroy. It is poetry in the classic tradition; there is included here no extreme of technique, or the lack of it, no example of the cult of unintelligibility, no violent left-wing protests or obscurities.

The book's second interest, and to my mind its greatest, is the picture it gives as a whole of the attitude of England's poets in these times. Oddly enough, comparatively few of the poems speak directly of the war. It is almost as if their authors did not recognize the actual shape of the danger which confronts this people. The hope and the belief which supports them is based on a state of mind which is so sure of itself, so firm in its conviction that the established order of Right will prevail against whatever odds, that it can face chaos and catastrophe with neither panic nor fury. It is a doctrine of stubborn courage, but one which offers no preventive and no remedy for the ill but the refusal to die. That is not to say these poems preach resignation; they preach endurance, they are unable to conceive of defeat. And so for respite the poets turn from actuality to the comfort of a nostalgic recollection of the beauties of peace, to the assurance that the time of seed and fruitful harvest under an English heaven will surely come again.

Considered from one angle, this approaches an emotional escapism. Therefore one wonders if this collection of poems is truly representative of the spirit of a great people at war. These are the off-moments, the comfort taken as a potion against disaster, the memories of other days clung to, with the eyes shut, the retreat into the personal dream. The true spirit of England is expressed, I think, not so much by her articulate poets as by the voices of that

> . . . . . lowly throng
> Who sing unconscious of their song,
> Whose lips are in their lives.

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Derlethiana

VILLAGE YEAR: A Sac Prairie Journal. By August Derleth. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1941. 314 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES GRAY

THERE is a corner of Wisconsin that belongs indisputably to August Derleth at least as far as the purposes of letters go. He has written novels about Sac Prairie's hundred-year-old history, short stories about its contemporary life, and poems about the emotion that its scenes awake in him. Now he has brought all of those interests together in his latest and perhaps his most attractive book.

"Village Year" includes excerpts from an actual journal which the young writer has been keeping for a long time. In it August Derleth has set down all the things about the pageant of life in a secluded corner of the world that would please an alert, sensitive, humorous, and enormously alive creature like himself. He talks with the old men and women, stirring their memories of the German customs brought to America by the immigrants. He lets no dramatic incident of the daily life escape him and in the harness shop (still the meeting place of the villagers) he hears stories of fights and rivalries, passion and romance, ribaldry and gallantry. He himself listens for the accent of the people and analyzes the peculiar character of their wit.

August Derleth's town, like Thornton Wilder's famous one of the play, is concerned with the great elemental things: with birth, marriage, death. Money bothers it comparatively little, for no one has much. A certain miserable niggardliness in a villager, Hester Duff, seems worthy of comment. But most of the stories have to do with people who work hard and uncomplainingly for a meagre living, carrying even the knowledge of approaching death about with them as they continue their heavy chores.

For Sac Prairie's chronicler, it is not merely the simple drama of the place that makes it appealing. He loves also its scenes. He sees color in winter where few eyes perceive it. He enjoys equally the enfolding silence of a winter snowfall and the graciousness of a summer landscape. He writes about all this with affection and understanding. If occasionally he mars the robustness of his style with a calculated phrase or an elaborately melodic cadence to a descriptive sentence, these mannerisms are soon forgotten in still another good story.

The book is charmingly illustrated.

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"Mr. Shearing is adept at stitching with a strong, red thread of murder. He is a painstaking researcher, a superb writer, a careful technician, and a master of horror. There is no one else quite like him."—*The New Yorker*

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The Long Era

LOUISIANA HAYRIDE. By Harnett T. Kane. New York: William Morrow. 1941. 471 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

THIS brilliant account of the twelve years (1928-1940) that brought the birth, flowering, and death of the first totalitarian system to be created in the United States is as interesting as any novel. Ignorant of Fascism and Nazism as he was of almost everything, Huey Long, buffoon, gangster, and political genius, invented a model for dictatorship in this country and gave it its first trial. If he had not been killed, no one knows whether it might not have led him to the White House. His rule, using the symbols and machinery of democracy, left democracy dead in Louisiana. He controlled the Legislature, all the courts, education, police, finances, and national guard. He had his Gestapo; he only lacked concentration camps and complete press censorship. For years the United States Courts could not touch him or his criminal followers and even after his death had to compromise shamefully with them.

There is another side to the ledger, for the soil of Louisiana had been long prepared for the coming of Huey Long. Its roads, schools, and social services were below the national average. There was a large population of rural poor whites, "hillbillies," who immediately favored the nucleus of Huey's power. His "share the wealth" program, "Every Man a King" would have swept the entire South, if he had lived long enough. The shot that put an end to his life was fired by an earnest man whose family had incurred the dictator's malice. When he died the nation drew a deep breath of relief. Huey Long had become a nightmare from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The last third of Mr. Kane's book is more absorbing than his account of Huey Long's triumphs, and even more sinister in its revelation of the relation between the Government of the United States and the known malefactors that Long's death had left in power. The story of the floods of Federal wealth poured into Louisiana to purchase the good-will of the Long machine, the sudden cessation of Federal tax indictments, the alliance between Washington and a corrupt dictatorship is worth a book in itself.

Compared to the foreign models Louisiana's experiment was a bawdy farce, but as the author states, it proves that for the real menace to our way of life we should look within. If it comes here it will be what Huey called himself, *sui generis.* This first venture has led to the ruin of thousands and to murder and suicide, and it once scared many sober people out of their wits. Now that all the evidence is in and the accounts almost closed it is even more terrifying to thoughtful Americans.

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Modern Times

THE DARKEST HOUR. By Leo Lania. Translated by Ralph Marlowe. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1941. 235 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by HENRY B. KRANZ

IN September, 1939, the French Republic declared war on her German emigrants as well as on Hitler. All men of German origin residing in France (including Austrians, Saarlanders, and Czechs) between the ages of seventeen and fifty-five, were arrested. All emigrants living in Paris had to present themselves at the Stade de Colombes, a large sports stadium on the west side of Paris with a blanket and food for two days. But with rare exceptions these people were sent to concentration camp, where they remained until the Germans occupied the north of France nine months later.

Almost all of them were fugitives from Hitler's wrath; thousands had been in Nazi concentration camps.

"The Darkest Hour" is the story of an Austrian newspaperman and author who all his life had fought for democracy, who had opposed totalitarianism as bravely when its name was Russia as when it called itself Italy, Germany, or Spain; nevertheless he had to share the fate of the many thousands of innocents who fell victim to a panic stricken French regime.

Hence this is not only the personal story of Leo Lania but of the men and women who have met death or ruin in these camps. Bureaucracy, stupid police officers, and a disorganized government failed to understand that these people were actually the best friends France had in her struggle against barbarism.

Edgar Ansel Mowrer in his introduction says frankly: "Read this book and learn how the Third French Republic in its dotage treated foreigners eager and willing to serve humanity under the French flag."

Mr. Lania describes with color and vigor how he and his comrades, many of them artists and scientists—some men over sixty—lived in a camp in the Bretagne, how he escaped just in the nick of time, how he succeeded in crossing occupied France from Brest to Tours, how he slunk into the unoccupied zone; from there he went to Marseilles and later across the Pyrenees to Spain and Portugal. It is a gripping story which makes breathless reading.

Much has been heard about the conditions in these French camps where still many thousands are waiting for exit visas to South—and North America. Lania's story is authentic. "The water trickled through the tent roof,

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the straw we slept on grew damp through and through. The whole camp suffered from dysentery. Sanitary conditions went from bad to worse."

Mr. Lania feared and hoped, struggled—and won. He lived through this hell and fled when the first German soldiers entered the camp. From then on every day and every night was one of terror. At any moment he might be caught and shot. He marched and bicycled, was helped by many friendly French peasants, and was again arrested and freed. He was a hunted animal.

His escapes and adventures make an exciting tale, one of the many truly anguished stories of our time, told with frankness and simplicity, yet without any bitter feeling against the very nation which treated him worse than a criminal. "I believe in France," Mr. Lania concludes his stirring account. "My bitterest experiences can not destroy my love and sympathy for the French people."

As a document as well as an adventure story Leo Lania's book deserves the attention of many American readers.

Books in Brief

WILLIAMSBURG, OLD AND NEW. *Hildegarde Hawthorn. D. Appleton-Century Co.* $4.00. If there are still people who think of early Colonial times in America only in terms of Indians and crude settlements, they should read this latest of Hildegarde Hawthorn's many books. Fifty years before the Revolution Williamsburg was perhaps the merriest and the liveliest town in America with elegant mansions, streets of shops for the thousand beautiful and expensive things that eighteenth century women desired, a theatre, riotous and comfortable inns, a Governor's Palace. But today anyone who has a car to tour South to the James River can see Williamsburg almost as it existed then, and can say a prayer for Governor Spottiswood, one of those rulers who were builders of impeccable taste. This book is an interesting account of early times in aristocratic America before there were Tories or Rebels, and it can serve as an admirable guide book.

TOUGHEN UP AMERICA! *Dr. Victor G. Heiser. Whittlesey House.* 1941. $2. Dr. Heiser writes with authority about what we poor humans can do to make our bodies more efficient so that we can endure the terrors that seem to be brewing for us and have something left over for the dim future when we can sleep again dreamless in our beds. Germs, what to do about the signs of age, diet, vitamins, and disease in general are surveyed again in a book that is informative and useful.

ELECTRIC EEL CALLING. *Shelby Shackelford, Charles Scribners' & Sons.* $3. It is unusual to find a book as charming and observant of man and nature resulting from a scientific expedition. With a biologist and her husband, a physicist, the author travelled three thousand miles to Brazil's Para River, which carries the upper waters of the Amazon, in search of that wierd creature, the electric eel. To be sure electric eels existed then in New York's aquarium and one of them wearily shot voltages into electric lamps at New York's World's Fair. But the habits and gifts of the electric eel are the least important parts of Mrs. Shackelford's narrative, though they found, startlingly, that the eel could produce currents of electricity long after death. But it is for the observations of an intelligent and sympathetic woman, about the men and the multitudinous creatures on the land, in the waters and the air of the steaming tropics, that this book should be read. The tropics wove a spell about her which she is able to communicate to the reader. Pleasantly illustrated by the author.

NEW WORLD IN SCIENCE, *edited by Harold Ward, Robert M. McBride & Co.,* $3.50. There has long been a need for an up-to-date compilation of the latest achievements and discoveries of science in its various fields. That this book is worth reading and owning is proved by the names of its thirty-three collaborators, although some of their contributions are slight, in spite of resounding titles. But there is plenty of stimulating material here for any lay reader.

THE KAW, HEART OF A NATION, *Floyd Benjamin Streeter, Farrar & Rinehart,* $2.50. This is the twelfth volume of an admirable series of books dealing with American rivers. Actually the Kansas River, the Kaw is one of the many streams that flow through the richest farm land of America into the Missouri. From the time the first Conquistador, Coronado, ventured into what is now Kansas, the Kaw was the main path of travel between the Mississippi and the Far West. The westward journey of traders, Mormons, gold-seekers in covered wagons, and soldiers travelled along its shallow waters. It was the focus of the dramatic and bloody events that preceded the Civil War. Mr. Streeter's book is a faithful and lively account of the history of the river and of the people who have settled near its banks to form one of the most compact and prosperous groups of men on the surface of the globe.

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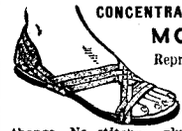

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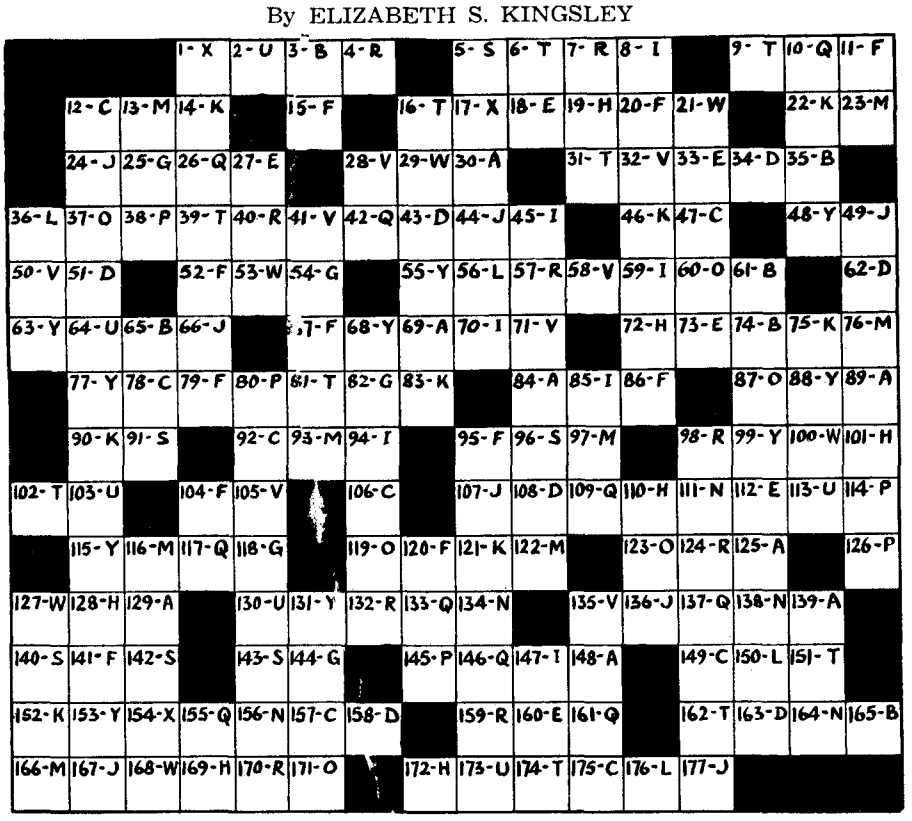
Double-Crostics: No. 373

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 7 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Persistently opposed.

B. Religious movement led by Newman, Keble and Pusey (1833).

C. Puffed out, bulging (of a skirt) (Fr.)

D. Agreement based on conventions or declarations.

E. Italian seaport on the Adriatic.

F. Novel by Thomas Hardy (4 wds.) (1882).

G. Highest mount of Lepontine Alps.

H. Hoaxed as by a falsehood (slang).

I. Name of famous Bret Harte baby hero.

J. Mythological heroine of Glück opera.

K. Any wedge-shaped part of arch (middle one is Keystone).

L. Wide-mouthed jug or pitcher.

M. Scene of 1914 battle in Flanders on the Iser.

N. Shabbily clothed; worn out.

O. Homeric appellation for Hera.

P. Brisk, biting.

Q. Welcomed with cries of joy (of African origin).

R. Affected strongly with wonder or terror.

S. Jewish settlement in Palestine (Jew. hist.)

T. Charlatan.

U. Surpassed in winning.

V. At once (colloq.; 2 wds.)

W. Keeping vigil.

X. Card game played for stakes.

Y. In a scolding or froward manner.

WORDS

148 139 30 69 84 89 125 129

3 165 35 65 74 61

92 149 175 12 47 106 157 78

108 43 62 34 163 158 51

27 73 18 33 160 112

52 11 104 141 20 15 95 120 67 86 79

118 54 25 144 82

128 169 110 72 172 19 101

94 85 45 59 147 70 8

167 136 66 24 107 49 44 177

152 22 121 83 75 46 90 14

36 150 56 176

23 116 97 93 166 13 122 76

111 164 156 138 134

123 37 60 119 87 171

114 80 38 126 145

117 26 133 155 137 109 10 146 42 161

159 124 170 98 57 40 132 7 4

140 143 91 96 142 5

16 102 162 9 174 39 31 6 151 81

113 173 130 103 2 64

32 41 135 71 58 28 105 50

100 29 127 21 168 53

1 154 17

55 68 131 63 115 153 77 99 48 88

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TRADE WINDS

WASHINGTON is the boom town of America. Once it was a swamp; today it is the heart of the biggest arsenal of democracy the world has ever known.

☞Into this throbbing center last week came booksellers by the hundreds to hold their forty-first annual convention, but the first in the nation's capital. From May 4 through May 7 they met for work and entertainment, convening first on Sunday to round up friends and lay plans for the days ahead, and also to register at headquarters in the Willard Hotel. By noon the preliminaries had been finished, and the delegates betook themselves in different directions. Some availed themselves of the hospitality of the Pennsylvania Central Airlines and of Patricia O'Malley, author of "Wings for Carol," and enjoyed a flight over Washington and Mt. Vernon. Others, on the invitation of a group of nineteen publishers, took a cruise on the Potomac. In the evening there was a shore dinner at Hogate's.

★ ★

☞By Monday, the convention settled down to business. A Promotional Clinic, presided over by Albert R. Crone of the *Publishers' Weekly*, opened the proceedings and touched off a lively discussion. By afternoon the participants were ready for relaxation and groups of booksellers stormed the sightseeing buses and toured the city. In the evening they were the guests of the Viking Press at a preview of John Steinbeck's new motion picture, *The Forgotten Village*, a beautiful story, beautifully photographed.

★ ★

☞Tuesday was a busy day, with numerous round table discussions scheduled. Several addresses and lively informal discussion rounded out the session on that day and carried over to the next when the convention came to an official end with a dinner and ball.

★ ★

☞From the general proceedings various bits of news and impressions remained with us. Among others:

☞There are very pretty women selling books in America.

☞Frank Frazier's happy look as he contemplated the welcome which seemed to be preparing for former Ambassadress Harriman's "Mission to the North," which Lippincott is to publish on May 28.

☞The disappointment caused by Frank Henry's absence from the meetings.

☞The Wednesday luncheon at which A. A. Berle, Jr., was the chief speaker.

☞The banquet on Wednesday night at which the main addresses were delivered by Lord Halifax and Secretary Knox.

☞Pete Howe and Bob DeGraff bubbling with satisfaction over the success of Pocket Books.

☞The belief of many booksellers that Helen Judson's biography of Edith Cavell will prove one of the most interesting books of the Spring.

☞The talk that frequently recurred about Pierre van Paassen's "The Time Is Now."

☞The exciting exhibition of old book catalogues, booksellers' material, and handbills from a collection loaned by Frederic Melcher of the *Publishers' Weekly* displayed in the Library of Congress through the courtesy of Archibald MacLeish, who has been doing magnificent work in his new job.

☞The superb Whitman collection and collection of early Negro literature displayed with the foregoing exhibit.

☞The regret expressed at the absence of Christopher Morley.

☞The elections of new A.B.A. officials: Karl Placht, president (re-elected); John Remington, first vice-president; Harry Korner, second vice-president; Earnest Dawson, third vice-president; Nicholas Wreden, treasurer; Marion Bacon, secretary.

☞The news that Hans Treuenfels has taken over the Greystone Press.

★ ★

☞So many inquiries are still coming into the *SRL* editorial department about the article on the Dictionary of American English ["The Book America Wrote," Nov. 23, 1940] that readers may be interested in several pamphlets on "The Growth of American English," by Sir William A. Craigie, editor of the *Dictionary*, published by the Oxford University Press. These pamphlets bear the mysterious insignia *S.P.E. Tract No. LVII*—the Society for Pure English. For years, the Society has been issuing such "Tracts" with equally mysterious and delightful titles: "On Hyphens, Shall and Will, Should and Would in Newspapers of Today," "Persian Words in English," "The 'Split' Infinitive and a System of Clauses," and so on. Readers who delight in Fowler and the quirks and precisions of language should look into the S.P.E. (care of Oxford Press). In the first-mentioned pamphlet, Sir William explores the American formation of "new derivative forms and attributive collocations or other compounds."

LOUIS GREENFIELD.

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